

Medicare Part D and pharmacy services to residents of nursing homes

ISSUE: When policymakers created Part D, they gave most attention to how the system of competing private plans would work for beneficiaries who fill prescriptions at retail pharmacies. However, about 5 percent of Medicare beneficiaries reside in long-term care facilities. More than half of these individuals are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. Residents of nursing facilities are typically much sicker and frailer, and they take, on average, 6 to 10 prescription drugs per day compared with 2 to 4 for Medicare beneficiaries living in the community.

KEY POINTS:

- MedPAC staff asked researchers at Harvard Medical School's Department of Health Care Policy to interview key stakeholders to understand how Part D is affecting the way prescription drugs are provided to NF residents.
- We will outline some of the key issues confronting stakeholders as Part D has gotten underway.
- Harvard researchers will provide observations from stakeholder interviews about how relationships between nursing facilities, long-term care pharmacies, and Part D plans are evolving.

ACTION: Commissioners should provide feedback on the content and tone of this draft, which we intend to include in the Commission's June Report to the Congress.

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